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SUBJECT: QATAR-CUBA: REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 52541

[¶1.](#) In response to reftel request, Post provides the
following information on Qatar's relations with Cuba.

Investment and Bilateral Trade

[¶2.](#) In April, state-owned real estate company Qatari Diar
signed a USD 70 million deal with Cuba to develop a five-star
resort on the island to consist of a 200-bedroom hotel and 60
deluxe villas. The investment is a joint venture with Gran
Caribe, a company owned by the Cuban Ministry of Tourism.
Three additional sites have been identified in Cuba for
possible future development.

[¶3.](#) A Joint Qatari-Cuban Committee for Economic, Commercial
and Technical Cooperation met for the fourth time in Doha on
April 19 and endorsed a number of recommendations to
strengthen bilateral relations in a variety of fields. The
two sides committed to initiate projects in pharmaceuticals
and biotechnology. The Cuban delegation further expressed
Havana's desire to work with Qatar's public and private
sectors to implement and develop different projects designed
to manufacture, patent and market medical products in Qatar
and the GCC region. Qatar responded that it would deliver
Cuba's request to GCC standardization officials during their
next meeting. The two countries also agreed to bolster
commercial exchanges. The Cuban delegation encouraged Qatari
businessmen to participate in the Havana Expo in November.
The parties also agreed to finish up all necessary steps
towards creating the Qatari-Cuban Businessmen Council before
the end of 2008. On Finance, the Cuban delegation expressed
its desire to establish an agreement between the Cuban
Commercial Bank and Qatari banks, while the Qatari side
suggested opening a branch of Qatar National Bank in Havana.
On tourism, Qatar Airways announced it would organize, in
collaboration with travel agencies and the press, a tour to
Cuba in order to encourage Qatari tourists to travel to the
country.

[¶4.](#) There are several signed agreements in place between
Qatar and Cuba, such as an agreement ratified in 2005 on
encouragement and protection of investments, and a 2007
ratification of an agreement on the avoidance of dual
taxation and the prevention of financial evasion regarding
income tax. In December 2006, the Amir endorsed an agreement
from November 2006 on administrative assistance for a customs
law to prevent, track, and fight customs crimes. In July
2006, the two countries signed an air transport agreement.

Exchange Programs

[¶5.](#) In May 2007, the Amir issued a decree endorsing a
scientific and educational cooperation agreement signed in
November 2006 between Qatar and Cuba. Qatar's National

Council for Culture, Art, and Heritage has a cooperation agreement with the Cuban Cultural Ministry. Cuba occasionally participates in some Qatari cultural events such as the Doha International Book Fair. The Joint Committee for Economic, Commercial and Technical Cooperation discussed at its fourth session in Doha in April the possibility of carrying out joint scientific research projects in the health sector, with a special focus on primary health care. In April, Qatar and Cuba signed a medical services cooperation agreement that aims to identify areas of cooperation between the two countries in Qatar's public health sphere. Under the agreement, the Cuban side will establish and run a hospital in Dukhan city, some 80 km west of Qatar's capital, Doha. Cuban specialists will provide medical services at the hospital and advanced training courses to doctors, technicians and nurses in Qatar, as well as assess problems related to public health in the different state sectors. The two countries also agreed to organize Cuban Cultural Week in Qatar during the second half of 2008. In the energy sector, Qatar and Cuba agreed to develop a program to train executives of Cuba Petroleum Company at Qatar Petroleum. On the sports front, Qatar and Cuba agreed to organize training camps in Qatar aimed at building up the capabilities of Qatar's professional athletes.

Promotion of Democracy

¶6. Post has no evidence that Qatar works to promote democracy and human rights in Cuba.

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Diplomatic Visits

¶7. The Amir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, in April visited Cuba, where he met with Cuban President Raul Castro. No details about the talks were revealed. In March, Qatar's Amir met with Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque on the margins of the 20th Arab League Summit in Damascus, where the Minister delivered a letter from Castro to the Amir. While leading the Cuban side to discussions of the Joint Qatari-Cuban Committee for Economic, Commercial and Technical Cooperation, Minister for Foreign Investment and Economic Collaboration (MINVEC) Marta Lomas Morales also met in Doha with the Amir.

RATNEY